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DE RUEHMD #0620/01 1561731
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041731Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RHMFSS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
INFO RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4884
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000620

SIPDIS

FOR GENERAL WARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2018

TAGS: **PREL MARR AF SP**

SUBJECT: SCENESSETTER FOR JUNE 8-11 VISIT TO SPAIN OF
COMMANDER, U.S. AFRICA COMMAND

Classified By: AMBASSADOR EDUARDO AGUIRRE, JR., REASONS 1.4(B),(D).

¶11. (SBU) Summary: We warmly welcome your visit. We are convinced there is much Spain can do to support the AFRICOM mission, so this will be a have to say, and we strongly encourage you to solicit their views on Africa, particularly the Maghreb and Sahel, where they have significant ex

Military Cooperation

¶12. (C) Spanish military cooperation is important to the USG. The bases of Rota and Moron are strategic hubs, midway between the U.S. and Afgha interested in the Joint Strike Fighter. Spanish defense industry is a supplier to the U.S. Although the Zapatero government has imposed a ceiling plans to send two cargo aircraft and 100 support personnel to the EU mission in Chad.

¶13. (C) Last August, we raised with the GOS the possibility of basing at Rota an AFRICOM component (the Joint Intelligence Operations Center). to Spain and growing importance to the U.S. We also have been advised informally by OSD and JCS that Rota may be one of several locations under hence the importance of your visit. We should discuss carefully the timing and content of any requests we make to the Spanish in this regard.

¶14. (C) Our U.S. Navy colleagues have discussed with us the possibility of adding Tarragona and Las Palmas to the list of ports where we can take nuclear powered warships (presently the list is Cartagena Spanish Policy Towards Africa

¶15. (U) Because of history, proximity, immigration, terrorism, and the presence of Spanish enclaves in Ceuta and Melilla, North Africa is strat immigration and security cooperation. The Ministers of Interior of Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Malta, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania,

¶16. (C) In the case of Western Sahara, there are press reports indicating Zapatero plans to intensify efforts to promote a political solution. note an independent Western Sahara is not a realistic option, they are concerned that excessive pressure on the Polisario to accept Morocco's p

¶17. (U) Sub-Saharan Africa has not traditionally been a Spanish priority, but that may be changing. In 2006 Spain launched Plan Africa (2006-20

¶18. (C) You may hear about the April 20-26 incident in which a Spanish fishing vessel (the "Playa de Bakio") was taken by Somali pirates. In th get an anti-piracy resolution adopted in the UNSC. Testifying before the Spanish Congress May 22, Moratinos said Spain would be willing to take Counter-Terrorism, Narcotics, and Illegal Immigration

¶19. (C) Spain is an al-Qaeda target and a critical player in U.S.-EU counter-terrorism efforts due to its proximity to the Maghreb and a popula terrorism to be one of its top national security priorities and has identified numerous Islamic extremist groups operating within its borders. Europe as a whole.

¶10. (C) Bilateral cooperation is strong. Spain pursues an aggressive agenda in law enforcement, judicial, and information-sharing efforts with Initiative (in the ports of Algeciras, Barcelona, and Valencia) and the Megaports Initiative to detect radioactive cargo (in the port of Algeci Stovepipes within the Spanish system and interagency rivalries are a continuing challenge both for them and us. In addition to the threat from

¶11. (C) The Spanish Government ranks drug trafficking as one of its most important law enforcement concerns and maintains excellent relations uncommon, some of it brought into Spain by illegal immigrants. Spanish authorities cooperate closely with the DEA Madrid Country Office. In May

¶12. (C) The premier Spanish law enforcement agencies are the National Police and the Civil Guard, both of which fall under the Ministry of Int terrorism and terrorist financing, and narcotics. The National Police also have jurisdiction over documentation for nationals and foreigners (f and in Spanish waters. Spain's Organized Crime Intelligence Center (CICO) coordinates (with varying degrees of success) counter-narcotics opera and alien smuggling requires joint and multi-agency action, and it is strongly in the U.S. interest to deepen cooperation with both MOD and MOI

¶13. (U) Historically Spain received few immigrants, but the rapidly increasing prosperity of recent decades has changed that. Immigrants now a of sub-Saharan African immigrants in Spain is only about two percent of the total. In general, Spain has been welcoming to immigrants, but a sc of boatloads of illegal immigrants in the Canaries. The Civil Guard has responsibility for policing as well as social and humanitarian function most significantly with the appearance of small boats (pateras or cayucos). During the Summer of 2006 these small boats carried over 30,000 ill interdiction, and rescue. The center has brought about a significant reduction in illegal immigration to the Canary Islands. Members of the Nat underway to work in concert with other countries to stem the flow of illegal immigration (e.g., joint projects with Morocco related to Ceuta ar

Political and Economic Climate

¶14. (C) President Zapatero's center left Spanish Socialist Workers, Party (PSOE) was the victor in the March 9 general election. The principal economies in Europe, but growth is slowing significantly. A housing boom that had contributed greatly to growth for several years ended abruptly immigrants. U.S. investment has long been important to the economy (more so than bilateral trade), but the tables have turned. In 2007, Spain w

Conclusion

¶15. (C) Again, we are looking forward to your visit. We are firmly convinced AFRICOM's mission and Spain's strategic interests coincide in mar